

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejection set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims Status

Claims 15 and 16 remain pending in the application. Claims 12 through 14 have been canceled. Claims 15 and 16 have been amended to even more succinctly define the invention and/or to improve their form. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

Allowable Subject Matter

It is acknowledged with appreciation that Claims 15 and 16 are merely objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

In response, Claims 15 and 16 have been rewritten in independent form and otherwise to improve their form. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the objection has been overcome.

Art Rejection

Claims 12 through 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,160,969 (Mizuma, et al.) in view of Japanese Patent Document No. 11-2961 (Kashiwabara, et al.).

The rationale underlying the foregoing art rejection is succinctly set forth in the Official Action.

Without conceding the propriety of the rejection and solely to expedite prosecution, Claims 12 through 14 have been canceled. Accordingly, the rejection is now moot and further comment thereon is not necessary.

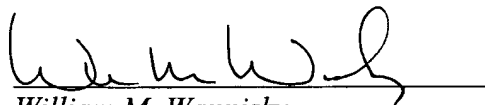
Closing Comments

This Amendment could not have been presented earlier in the prosecution, inasmuch as it was earnestly believed that the claims heretofore on file were in condition for allowance. No additional claims are being presented. It is believed that the Examiner's familiarity with the present application will allow full consideration hereof without the expenditure of undue time and effort.

Favorable reconsideration, entry hereof, and early passage to issue of the present application are earnestly solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our New York office at the address shown below.

Respectfully submitted,



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